

# Heritage News

Heritage News is the newsletter of the YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March and May; and distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market, and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.

JANUARY 1996

Ypsilanti, MI

- MEETING:** Tuesday, January 23, 1996—7:30 pm
- LOCATION:** Riverside Arts Center  
Club Level (lower level)  
76 N. Huron St.  
Ypsilanti, Michigan
- SPEAKER:** James Horton, Wood Engraver, Printmaker,  
Graphic Designer
- PROGRAM:** "Wood Engraving: The *Almost* Lost Method  
of Printmaking"

Flipping through the magazines and catalogues we receive every day, we take for granted the many illustrations (usually black and white or color photographs) found in them. Modern photographic processes make illustrations plentiful and commonplace, but that wasn't always the case. Prior to the development of process (photographic halftone) reproductions, printmaking was the technique used for illustration, and wood engraving was the print medium of choice, because unlike metal engraving, woodblocks could be printed on the same page with moveable type.

A medium rich in history, with roots going back to 16th century artists Albrecht Durer and Hans Holbein, wood engraving reached its peak as an illustrative medium in the mid-to-late 19th century. Characterized by blazing contrasts, rich blacks against silvery tints, and an almost three-dimensional appearance on a flat surface, the process is simple, though the techniques take much practice to master.

The development of the photographic halftone process spelled the eventual decline of wood engraving, and the last commercial engraving company folded in the early 1970s, not due to lack of wood, but because the master engravers retired and there were no skilled engravers to replace them. We are fortunate to have as our January speaker **James Horton**, one of the few remaining practitioners of what is sometimes referred to as the "lost" method of printmaking.

A graduate of Eastern Michigan University's art department, Jim studied printmaking under Professor Richard Fairfield and now operates a small private press in Ann Arbor. He has won awards as an artist and a teacher, and in 1993 he was named Newsweek/WDIV "Teacher of the Year" for his work in graphic design at the Wayne-Westland Schools. A love of history, old machinery, and graphic processes led him to wood engraving, and he writes on the subject, exhibits prints, and presents workshops nationally.

(Continued)

Jim's presentation will focus on the history of the wood engraving process, with examples of actual prints (see many throughout this newsletter) and rare books illustrated with woodcuts, which members of the audience will be able to examine, along with some items from Jim's extensive collection of 19th century woodcuts and tools. And we'll wrap up the evening with a "mini-workshop," where participants will have the chance to actually proof (print) and keep a 19th century wood engraving!

We hope to see you there. As always, membership is not required. Bring a friend! Refreshments will be served!



### **HISTORICAL RESOURCES ESTABLISHES PETER PRIZE**

*Ed. note: the following article was written by Judy Endelman for a recent issue of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village Bulletin. Because it involves two Foundation members, we thought it would interest our readers, so we reprint it here in its entirety. Thanks to YHF board member Hank Prebys for passing it along to us.*

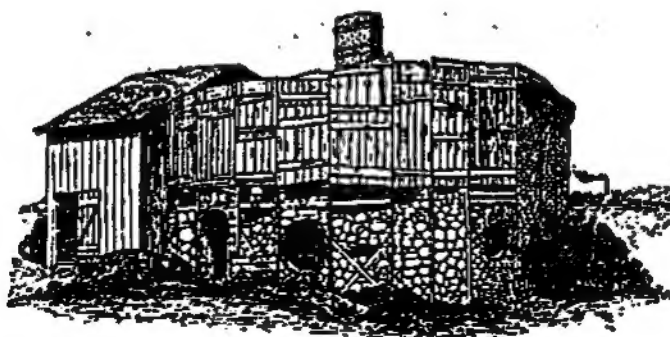
"Historical Resources is pleased to announce the establishment of the Peter Prize, named in memory of curator Peter Cousins who died in July of this year. The Peter Prize will be awarded to a staff member who demonstrates attention to historical authenticity and accuracy based on solid research and scholarship, as well as adherence to high professional and ethical standards. The first honoree is carpenter Don Randazzo, who received the award at the Historical Resources lunch on December 13. Honorees will be granted the privilege of signing the Prize, a large, free-standing sign, and receive a gift certificate to Border's Books. For those curious to see the Peter Prize, it is on exhibit in the Research Center Reading Room. Further details regarding Peter Prize criteria and procedures for making nominations will be announced after the first of the year. We are privileged to honor both Don Randazzo and the memory of Peter Cousins in this way."



## CLASSIC FILMS AT THE RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER

As part of the Beaux Arts Festival, a week-long program celebrating the arts both at Eastern Michigan University and around Ypsilanti, the Riverside Arts Center will host two classic horror films. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *The Most Dangerous Game* will kick off the festival at the RAC on Monday, January 22, at 7:30 pm. "Movies at the Riverside" is designed to present these two influential films in an atmosphere of the early neighborhood movie houses. The double feature includes cartoons and newsreel. For tickets or more information, call the EMU Box Office at 487-1221.

*Ed. note: Thanks to the Ypsilanti Courier for alerting us to the above event.*



RESIDENCE OF CHARLES JARVIS, YPSILANTI.

### NEWS FROM THE PAST

*The following is another installment in an occasional series reprinted from the Ypsilanti Commercial. This article (and accompanying illustration) was originally printed on Friday, May 11, 1894. Our thanks to YHF member James Mann for his diligent research and for passing his findings on to us.*

"We give to our readers here an excellent and faithful picture of a most unique dwelling, which will be familiar to many of them, and no less interesting to the others. We can safely challenge the whole country to produce its equal, and might perhaps say, "Competition open to the world." It is the residence of Mr. Charles Jarvis, on Huron Street north of Forest Avenue. Mr. Jarvis began the construction of this house about six years ago, and it is not yet completed. It is constructed upon designs of his own, and to a considerable extent by his own labor, but Mr. Jarvis' poor health has prevented his continuation of the work. The house is divided into two rooms on each floor, and it is a warm dwelling, but not light enough to be regarded as pleasant by most people. The owner occupies it alone.

"The house stands upon the bank of a little stream that meanders through the door yard and produces a wealth of water cresses and peppermint. The stream is historic, and is designated as a "creek" in the records of the old French claims which were surveyed in 1811, when Ypsilanti was a trading post known as "Godfroy's on the Pottawattamie Trail." Its mouth, where it discharges into the Huron River by the present M.C. railroad bridge, was the starting point of the survey, and the line ran thence southwesterly along a course now marked by trees left standing at that time, parallel with Forest Avenue. That was the north line of the lots, which embraced 2500 acres, deeded by President Monroe, June 11, 1811, to Gabriel Godfroy, Francis Pepin, and Louis LeChambre, two years after they established their post here and erected a building where the Sanitarium now stands."

## **YHF CALENDARS STILL AVAILABLE**

The **1996 Heritage Foundation Engagement Calendar** is still available! The calendar features historic photos, a spiral binding to facilitate easy hanging, and plenty of space in which to write appointments and reminders. Remember that with every calendar you purchase, you help the Foundation meet its goals of preserving our historic structures and informing the public about preservation issues. Pick up a copy or two or three at the general meeting or call **Lisa Walters** at **485-3683** for free home delivery within the city limits.

On a related topic, the calendar committee seeks one or two volunteers to assist with marketing. If you could spare just a few hours for a couple of weeks out of the year (probably June and September) please call **Lisa Walters** at the above number or talk to her at the general meeting.



**The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation**  
**Heritage News**  
**102 N. Wallace Blvd.**  
**Lisa Mills Walters, Editor (485-3683)**  
**Peg Du Fresne, Assistant Editor**



**Ypsilanti Historic Museum**  
**220 N. Huron St.**  
**Ypsilanti MI 48197**

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MARCH 1996

Ypsilanti, MI

**MEETING:** Tuesday, March 26, 1996--7:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** The Coffee Shop at the Freighthouse  
100 Rice Street  
Depot Town  
Ypsilanti, Michigan

**SPEAKER:** Barry La Rue (with additional slides and commentary by Jack Harris)

**PROGRAM:** "A Souvenir Of Ypsilanti"

After a sojourn in Ann Arbor, looking at its vernacular houses of the 1830's and '40's (our September '95 program), and one in Detroit, strolling down its once-proud Woodward Avenue (our November '95 program), we're back in Ypsilanti! And who better to help us take a look at our own backyard than two of Ypsilanti's most enthusiastic historic preservation boosters, our own **Barry La Rue and Jack Harris**.

Some of you may remember a slide program a few years back given by Barry's father, Bob La Rue. Well, Barry has dusted off those slides, added some new ones, and, together with Jack Harris and his slides, created a program that reminds us why the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation exists: to save our outstanding historic architecture and promote and celebrate its contributions to our community. The program will feature "then and now" photographs of residential and commercial buildings in Ypsilanti, and while some were victims of demolition prior to the passage of our local preservation ordinance, many are still standing, thanks to the efforts of the YHF and others.

Barry, our newest board member, has been a member of the Historic District Commission since 1987. Since his days at Roosevelt School, Barry has enjoyed studying Ypsilanti history and historic architecture. Active in many historic preservation projects over the years, he's been most recently involved in the Demetrius Ypsilanti sculpture restoration, the City Hall facade restoration, and the development of the Riverside Arts Center, located in the historic Masonic Temple building.

Jack, one of the pioneers of historic preservation in Ypsilanti, has been a member of both the YHF board and the HDC. The many preservation efforts in which he's been involved, too numerous to list in total here, include the Towner House rescue and the One Room Schoolhouse project on Eastern Michigan University's campus. Over the years, Jack has combined his love of historic architecture with his other passion: gardening and historic gardens.

(continued)



Barry and Jack welcome participation from audience members who have their own memories of the buildings we'll look at Tuesday night, so please plan to attend. This meeting will also be a wonderful introduction to the history and development of the preservation movement in Ypsilanti, so why not bring a non-member friend with you, perhaps someone new to the community? As always, we'll wrap up the meeting with refreshments and plenty of conversation about the subjects we all love: history, architecture, and Ypsilanti!

### CITY HALL RESTORATION UPDATE

We're still working on it! The office of Community and Economic Development recently learned that Ypsilanti had been awarded \$8,740 in grant money to assist with the facade restoration project. (Yes, we still have a long way to go.)

The funds will be complemented by a local match from the Downtown Development Authority in the amount of \$5,827 for a total of \$14,567. The funds have been designated for exterior paint removal, cleaning, and re-painting of the upper story facades. Quinn Evans/Architects estimate the cost for this work to be \$14,881. This work can be done in conjunction with the upper story masonry repair and window replacement to be accomplished with the previously awarded \$50,000 Michigan Department of Transportation grant this construction season.

These two grants together will help improve the appearance of the upper stories of City Hall in a manner compatible with the historic downtown business district. Alternate funding sources still need to be identified to complete the more extensive masonry work on the ground floor level.

*Ed. Note: Thanks to Community and Economic Development Director (and YHF member) Jennifer Goulet for the above information.*



## WASHTENAW COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS MOVES TO RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER

This time the Ypsilanti Press: an edition of the Ann Arbor News has beaten us to the story, but such good news bears repeating. The Riverside Arts Center has taken on another role: home to the Washtenaw Council for the Arts, previously located in Ann Arbor. The move, which Ypsilanti Community and Economic Development Director Jennifer Goulet calls "a real vote of confidence for the city," is scheduled for April 1.

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation members and, indeed, all Ypsilantians should be pleased with this news and proud of the opportunity to show the rest of the county what Ypsilanti has to offer.

In addition to events such as film festivals, plays, and dance performances, the Riverside Arts Center has been the site of two general meetings for the YHF and, of course, the joint Riverside Arts Center/Demetrius Ypsilanti sculpture restoration fundraiser last year. Moreover, two of our YHF board members, Peg Du Fresne and Barry La Rue, also serve on the RAC's operations board.

We congratulate the WCA on their wise choice and welcome them to Ypsilanti.

In a related story, the Ypsilanti community has an opportunity to demonstrate its support for the WCA on Celebrity Wait Night, a fundraiser to be held on Tuesday, April 23, 1996, at the Real Seafood Company. This event is a major fundraiser for the WCA's operating and administrative expenses. "Celebrity" waiters (including Mayor Farmer and several City Council members) will serve invited WCA guests, and the Real Seafood Company will donate 15% of the house proceeds plus all tips to the WCA. Seatings are at 6:00 and 8:30 p.m. If you are interested in attending, please call Jennifer Goulet at 483-9646.

## APRIL 21ST IS RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER DAY AT HAAB'S!

Have lunch or dinner at Haab's Restaurant on Sunday, April 21, and show your support for the arts in Ypsilanti **and** help in the revitalization of a community landmark. Haab's will donate a portion of the April 21st sales to the Riverside Arts Center, Washtenaw County's newest arts venue, located in the historic 1909 Masonic Temple building.

Upcoming events at the Riverside include P.T.D. Productions' staging of James Goldman's *The Lion In Winter*. A fictionalized historical comedy set in the court of Henry II, King of England, in 1183, *The Lion In Winter* tells the story of Henry and his estranged wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Equally powerful and power-hungry, Henry and Eleanor try to outwit and out-manuever each other, using anyone and everyone as a pawn in their battle royal to determine the heir to the throne.

Directed by Steven J. Myers, *The Lion In Winter* stars Dennis F. Platte as Henry II and Janet E. Rich as Eleanor of Aquitaine. Performance dates are April 18-21 (why not make it dinner **and** the theatre on Sunday?) and April 25-27, with all performances at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$9 for seniors and students and can be purchased at the door or reserved by calling 483-7345 or 484-4907.

The Riverside Arts Center is located at 76 N. Huron Street, in the heart of Ypsilanti's downtown historic district.



## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWS

Following a series of meetings in recent months, the newly reorganized Eastside Neighborhood Association is up and running! The ENA, encompassing a large area surrounding Prospect Park, has named a board of directors, and volunteers are at work producing the association's newsletter and developing a membership database.

The ENA's goals are "to protect and promote the best interests of the residents of the area, to promote and strive for the improvement and betterment of all public facilities and services within the area, to promote and encourage a better community and civic spirit, to preserve and promote the history and historical character of the area, to cooperate with county and city officials and other civic and public organizations for the general welfare of the entire community of Ypsilanti, and to foster goodwill and friendship between and among all the residents of the area."

The next regular meeting of the ENA is Wednesday, May 1 (time and location TBA). This meeting will focus on the ongoing Prospect Park revitalization project and maintenance issues related to the park. The May meeting will also be the kick-off for the membership drive, so all residents in the area are encouraged to attend. More details on the May meeting will appear in the first ENA newsletter, a special issue which will be distributed in mid-April to all households in the area.

For more information, call Terry McDonald at 483-2164.

On the other side of town, the Normal Park Neighborhood Association, in its seventh year of existence, is focusing its efforts on another public area, Recreation Park, the site of Rutherford Pool. NPNA and Woods Road Subdivision volunteers have been working in conjunction with the City's Recreation Department on plans for park improvements, including a jogging path. They are also coordinating efforts with the Chapelle School Parent Advisory Board regarding the consolidation of Recreation Park and the school playground, and the layout of play equipment.

Volunteers raised approximately \$7700 from residents during a door-to-door solicitation campaign last fall and will soon be seeking financial assistance from corporate sponsors. Last month the NPNA raised more than \$860 with a bottle and can drive, with nearly 50% of residents contributing. Future plans to support the Rec. Park effort include the annual NPNA Yard Sale on June 1, a golf outing at Whispering Pines Golf Course in Pinckney on June 7, and a picnic with activities in Recreation Park on June 23.

Another ongoing NPNA effort is the historic Rose Garden next to the Senior Center. Volunteers have spent many hours during the past few years weeding, planting, and pruning. The YHF donated funds for the purchase of rose bushes, but the NPNA can always use more volunteers and contributions.

If you're interested in the Rose Garden or in supporting the restoration of Recreation Park, call Carol Leyshock, the NPNA Rec. Park committee chairperson, at 481-0836.

*Ed. Note: If your neighborhood association or organization has good news to share, let us know! Call Lisa Walters at 485-3683.*





## **"FRIENDS OF THE YPSILANTI FREIGHTHOUSE" FORMING**

A group of Ypsilanti residents are taking the initial steps to incorporate as a non-profit community organization committed to "the preservation and restoration of the Ypsilanti Freighthouse, to educate and develop awareness of the historical significance of the building, and to raise funds to support these activities."

By-laws have been written, with incorporation papers filed with the State of Michigan. The first annual meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 22, 1996, at 7:00 p.m. in the Freighthouse coffee shop. The group's first fund-raising activity is already underway with the sales of the attractive "Ypsilanti Autumn" sweatshirts, available at the market for \$25.

Watch for more information and activity from this group in 1996. The Freighthouse has served this community in many ways since its construction in 1879 and is certainly worthy of this special attention and these efforts.

For more information, call Gary Urick at the Farmers' Market at 483-1480.

## **YPSILANTI "MYSTERY" FEATURED IN "BELIEVE IT OR NOT"**

*In the August 1994 Good News Edition of the Foundation News, we brought you the story of the mysterious disappearance of the Starkweather Fountain, which once stood directly west of the former Ypsilanti Savings Bank (now City Hall) on Huron Street. In this edition comes the following article, based on research by member James Mann. Thanks!*

Just after 7:00 p.m. on April 12, 1893, Ypsilanti was hit by a tornado that ripped through the city. George H. Loughridge had just left the Post Office on the corner of Huron and Pearl and was walking on Pearl when the tornado hit. The force of the wind knocked him into the gutter in front of the box factory. Looking up at the box factory, with its 80 foot tall brick chimney and 12 foot square base, Loughridge watched as the tornado carried off a 15 to 20 foot section of the chimney, intact and perfectly horizontal, high about Pearl Street, toward the river.

What became of the chimney is something of a mystery, as no trace of it was ever found. Some say the tornado dropped it into the river, where it sank out of sight into the muddy bottom. A local humorist claimed that the next morning a farmer in Canton found he had a new well, complete with bricks. The missing chimney was the subject of a Ripley's "Believe It Or Not" column in January 1963.

The box factory was rebuilt, complete with a new brick chimney, and even expanded. The business continued for many years. Today all that is left of the building is the front of the Ace Hardware store facing Pearl Street.

## 1996 MARKER BANQUET SCHEDULED

Mark your calendars now for the annual Marker Awards banquet. We'll be honoring deserving homeowners at the Ladies' Literary Club on Tuesday, May 14, at 6:30 p.m. Details will follow in the May newsletter.



**The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation**  
**102 N. Wallace Blvd.**

**Heritage News**

Lisa Walters, Editor (485-3683)

Peg Du Fresne, Assistant Editor (482-8666)



Ypsilanti Historic Museum  
220 N. Huron St.  
Ypsilanti MI 48197

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**MAY 1996**

**Ypsilanti, MI**

**MEETING:** Tuesday, May 14, 1996 - 6:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Ladies Literary Club, 218 Washington, Ypsilanti

## **SPECIAL EVENT: 1996 HISTORIC STRUCTURE MARKER BANQUET AND AWARDS**

In Ypsilanti, along with the proverbial flowers, the month of May brings the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation's annual Historic Structure Marker Banquet and Awards, where we honor deserving property owners for the work they've done on their historic buildings. Since 1977 (that's right--next year will be the 20th anniversary), the Foundation's Marker Program has recognized more than 110 homes, businesses, and churches in Ypsilanti for their significant historic architecture and continuing, sensitive maintenance.

The following owners of buildings will be awarded Historic Structure Markers this year and will be our special guests of honor on Tuesday, May 14th, at the Ladies Literary Club:

**MYRNA YEAKLE** for her home at 1007 W. Cross

Style: Bungalow

**BOBBY AND MELISSA HOLBROOK** for their home at 312 Miles

Style: Vernacular Cottage

**ALICE WHITNEY** for her home at 109 N. River

Style: Italianate with later additions

**HIGH-SCOPE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION** for the house at 201 Oak

Style: Wing and Gable

**JIM SORARUF AND MARJEAN ROSE SORARUF** for their home at 322 Maple

Style: Wing and Gable Greek Revival

**PAUL AND PENNY SCHREIBER** for their home at 922 Pleasant

Style: Moderne Colonial Revival

(continued)

Each year the banquet becomes more and more a Social Event of the Season, so if you are planning to attend, please call one of the Banquet Chairs--Karen Nickels at 483-8896, Rick Leyshock at 481-0836, or Hank Prebys at 487-0595--to discuss what dish you might like to bring to supplement our table. (The Marker Recipients are not expected to bring a dish, since they are our special guests.)

The evening begins with punch and hors d'oeuvres at 6:30 p.m., with dinner following at 7:15 p.m. The Marker program and presentations to recipients will follow. In addition, this year we have a special treat. Due to time constraints, **Jack Harris** was not able to give his slide presentation featuring "then and now" photographs of residential and commercial buildings in Ypsilanti at the March 26th general membership meeting. He has graciously offered to give this short presentation at the Marker banquet, where it will be a most appropriate addition to the evening's program.

We hope to see you there! **REMEMBER:** space is limited, so call now!

### **PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT LEGISLATION INTRODUCED**

The board of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation strongly endorses the preservation tax credit legislation which has recently been introduced by state Senator John Schwarz of Battle Creek.

The extra care required to maintain historic properties can be a burden to a homeowner of average means. This legislation will fill the gap between our low-income housing rehabilitation program and those wealthier individuals who can afford restoration on their own.

This credit will be a helping hand to the vast number of middle-class historic home owners who are stewards of one of Michigan's most valuable assets: its past.

Simply stated, the credit will enable those home owners within a historic district to qualify for a state income tax credit of 25% of qualified rehabilitation. There is a companion piece of legislation which allows business owners to take a similar 25% credit against the single business tax that they owe toward qualified rehabilitation of their commercial space.

Since Ypsilanti's historic district has both National Register and local designation status, certification under this act will occur by virtue of the normal HDC review process. The legislation is the latest push by the Michigan Historic Preservation Network.

We commend this important piece of legislation and urge our members to contact their elected state representatives to voice support for Senate Bill 625 and 626.

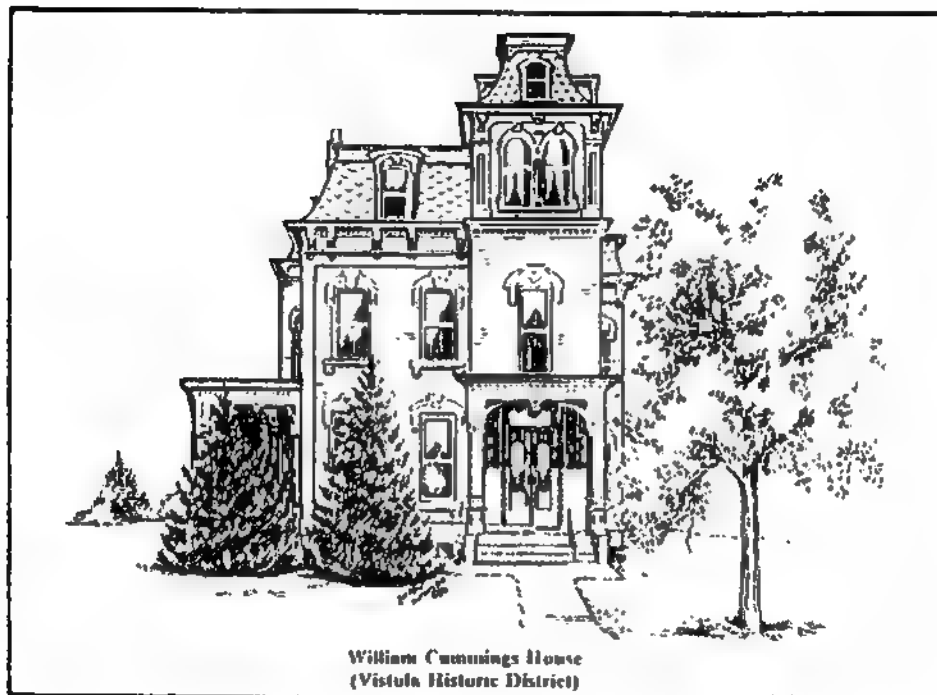
*Ed. Note: Thanks to YHF Board Member Barry La Rue for the above information.*

## LOOKING FOR A HISTORIC GETAWAY? NEW B & B OPENS IN TOLEDO

From Lorelei Crawford, sales manager at Materials Unlimited and former member of the Historic Home Tour Committee, comes the following report. In September of 1994, she and partner Lowell Greer bought and restored an 1857 Second Empire Style mansion located in Toledo's Vistula Historic District. Known as **The William Cummings House**, this 17 room mansion has been listed on both the National Historic Register and the Ohio Historic Register since 1978. In addition to living in The Cummings House, Lorelei and Lowell opened it to guests in March of 1995 as an elegant bed and breakfast.

Combining their vast collections of antiques and knowledge of architectural styles and interior decoration, Lorelei and Lowell have put the Cummings House through a top-to-bottom transformation, returning it to its original elegance. The second floor has three charming bedrooms, which share two full baths, as well as a common meeting room for visiting. The third floor has become a secluded four room suite, with a fully equipped kitchen and private bath. Each bedroom comes equipped with fresh flowers, clock radio, television and even white fluffy robes. An extended European style breakfast is served each morning on antique English bone china in the formal dining room.

The Cummings House is located at 1022 N. Superior Street, in the heart of the Vistula neighborhood, which was established in 1833. It is also near many Toledo area attractions: the Toledo Museum of Art, the Toledo Zoo, the Toledo Symphony and Repertoire Theatre, the Old West End Historic District, the Wolcott House Museum, and the Toledo Trolley Tour, to name a few. For reservations or more information, call Lorelei and Lowell at (419) 244-3219.



William Cummings House  
(Vistula Historic District)  
1022 Superior Street • Toledo, Ohio





## JANE BIRD SCHMIEDEKE RECEIVES HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD

Jane Bird Schmiedeke, founder and past president of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation and longtime chairman of Ypsilanti's Historic District Commission, is one of two recipients of this year's Michigan Historic Preservation Citizen's Award. Jane was presented with this prestigious and richly deserved award at the first annual Preservation Ball held recently on the University of Michigan campus. A fund-raising event for the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, the ball took place during their sixteenth Annual Preservation Conference in Ann Arbor.

Since 1979, the Michigan Historic Preservation Network has given a Citizen's Award annually "for those who through their efforts and involvement in historic preservation projects have made a significant contribution to the preservation of Michigan's Heritage." Jane Bird Schmiedeke was nominated by both Alice Burg, Ypsilanti's city planner, and Jack Harris, past president of the Heritage Foundation, former member of the Historic District Commission, and a retired EMU professor of English. In his three-page summation of Jane's contributions to Ypsilanti (*Profile of a Community Preservationist*), Jack Harris details her twenty-five years of continuous service to historic preservation in our community.

Jane co-founded, and for many years led, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation. She has been chairman of the Historic District Commission since its inception eighteen years ago and is the author of Ypsilanti's Historic District Ordinance, which has become the model for other communities seeking to establish historic districts. In 1971, Jane joined Nathalie Edmunds in a petition drive to prevent a would-be developer from razing five historic structures along North Huron Street. Two were lost, but three of the most significant ones were saved to quote Jack, "the most impressive transformation from decay to almost total restoration in the city." He goes on to say, "Her staying power astonishes all who know her, and it is this capacity to persevere far more than any one of her multitudinous projects, that establishes her as the premier preservationist in our community."

Jane's perseverance is especially impressive in light of the difficult opposition she has faced over the years as an appointed chair of a controversial city commission. She is not popular with everyone, and this does not concern her. Jack describes "her steady, day-to-day 'business-as-usual' approach to the job." He also notes that, "she has steered the ship of historic preservation--quietly, coolly, successfully--through all the storms that have battered against her in her determination to save Ypsilanti's often ill-used architectural treasures . . . . Jane has pressed on, sometimes against the hostility that goes with tough community service."

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation is thrilled that Jane's impressive record of public service in the interest of historic preservation is becoming more widely recognized. We heartily agree with Jack Harris's conclusion that Jane Bird Schmiedeke will "provide inspiration for generations to come."

*Ed Note: Thanks to YHF Board Member Penny Schreiber for contributing the above report. Congratulations, Jane.*



### BRINGING THE SOUND OF MUSIC OUTDOORS: YCB'S 1996 SUMMER "CONCERTS IN THE PARK" SERIES

Looking for something to do on those warm summer evenings coming up? Why not consider an old-fashioned outdoor band concert? It's that time of year again when the **Ypsilanti Community Band** takes their music out of doors to our neighborhood parks. The YCB's concerts are great occasions to gather the family and/or friends, pack a picnic basket, and enjoy one of our community's greatest resources: our historic parks.

So mark your calendars with these dates and plan to attend one or more of these concerts. The concerts are free, but donations to the Band are, of course, gratefully accepted.

|                     |                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| THURSDAY, MAY 30th  | Recreation Park - 7:30 p.m. |
| THURSDAY, JUNE 13th | Prospect Park - 7:30 p.m.   |
| THURSDAY, JUNE 27th | Recreation Park - 7:30 p.m. |
| THURSDAY, JULY 11th | Prospect Park - 7:30 p.m.   |

In addition, the Band will give these special performances:

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| MONDAY, MAY 27th      | Yankee Air Force (Willow Run Airport) - time TBD |
| SUNDAY, JUNE 30th     | Belleville (Victory Park) - 3:00 p.m.            |
| SATURDAY, AUGUST 17th | Ypsilanti Heritage Festival - time TBD           |

### NEW MORTGAGE PLAN TO HELP PRESERVATIONISTS

Interested in purchasing an affordable house much in need of restoration, but don't have the cash to make those improvements? A new mortgage plan can help. The 203K mortgage, run by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, has been around for a while, but the Clinton administration has been working to make the whole process easier on the homeowner by setting up networks of lenders and construction inspection consultants across the country.

The 203K mortgage covers the cost of not only the sales price but also the improvements. This can make housing more affordable in general but is especially important in helping to save houses that need restoration. It's primarily intended to renovate single-family, owner-occupied homes, but is open to investors and to dwellings with up to four units. A key limitation is that the loan amount can't exceed FHA maximums for your market area.

To get the names of mortgage companies that offer a 203K loan, contact the Detroit FHA field office at 226-6866 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## REMARKS ON THE 1996 PETITION FOR DEMOLITION OF THE TOWNER HOUSE

*Ed. Note: The following letter was delivered at the Public Meeting of the Historic District Commission on Tuesday, April 16, 1996. It is printed here in its entirety with the permission of the author, Mary Culver. Our thanks to Mary for this articulate message of support.*

Madam Chair, members of the Ypsilanti's HDC,

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard again, on behalf of this important historic resource, Ypsilanti's Towner House.

My name is Mary Culver and I live at 1840 Brookfield Drive in Ann Arbor. I am a life-long resident of Washtenaw County, and I am a preservationist with a special interest in Greek Revival architecture that goes back to 1955. In addition, my credentials include published articles on Washtenaw County's Greek Revival adobe houses and on the organization and arrangement of early midwest farmsteads, among others.

In January 1992 I met with David Evans of Quinn-Evans Architects to discuss an earlier demolition application proposed by the Presbyterian Church. Many of you are already familiar with Mr. Evans' firm and with the awards they've received for the rehabilitation of such buildings as Ypsilanti's Pease Auditorium, Detroit's City-County Building, Michigan's State Capitol in Lansing, and the Smithsonian Institution's buildings in our nation's capitol. At that time, Mr. Evans made a comment I've never forgotten. He said,

"No other town in the county can claim the excellence and diversity that developed in that three-block corridor of North Huron Street. In Ann Arbor, we have many outstanding architectural examples scattered across the city, but we have nothing to compare with Ypsilanti's North Huron Street area."

To carry his observation further, I know of no other place where, in the space of only three blocks, one can find three Greek Revival houses that provide a sequential architectural record of a town's history of growth and prosperity.

The impressive Breakey house at 125 N. Huron dates from the later stages of the design period, circa 1850. Its two stories and lofty white columns represent the culmination of high style dignity and pretension--elements used in its design by the same Ypsilanti men who are associated with the Towner House, Marcus Lane and Arden Ballard.

One block north at 211 N. Huron is the less pretentious but still dignified and spacious Whitmire House. Two stories tall and presenting its gable end to the street, it's thought to predate the Breakey house by only a few years.

But the Towner house represents the initial step in the progression that began with the log cabin. It was common for homesteaders to occupy their log cabins for as long as ten years before they could afford such niceties as brick chimneys, wood floors, stairways, and porches. When this happened, the result was often a house similar to the Towner House. In fact, drawings for a house similar to the Towner House, but made out of logs, were

published in New York in 1838 by Alexander Jackson Davis who was hired that year to design the U-M buildings in Ann Arbor. As built, the Towner house had just one-and-a-half stories, and the second floor was little more than a loft, lit by tiny windows just under the eaves and frequently divided into just two rooms, one for the boys in the family and one for the girls.

Recent deed research, carried out by Ina Hanel, a preservation specialist with the Washtenaw County Planning Commission, suggests a slightly later construction date than the 1837 most often quoted. That was the same year a cholera epidemic swept through the county, cutting short the lives of many settlers, and wild-cat banking practices resulted in so many failures that much new construction had to be postponed. There is little question, however, that the Towner house predates the other two. In Ms. Hanel's words,

"[Its] architecture and history...make it a monument to Ypsilanti's earliest years."

And if it is not the earliest remaining house in Ypsilanti, it is certainly one of a very small number. As such it represents step one in the architectural continuum, and even if you question its preservation on aesthetic grounds, it's all we have left of Chapter I. For this reason, its relocation or demolition would seriously compromise the mission of the historic district commission--which is to enhance the "greater good" of the entire community.

Furthermore, this application offers nothing to the community's greater good in return. How can the Historic District Commission be expected to rule in favor of an application that detracts from the greater public good without an overall plan that would make up for the loss?

The log cabins are gone, and other early structures that once graced North Huron Street have also disappeared. Are we to trade this important historic landmark for uninterrupted views of backyards, garages, and trash receptacles?

Please, commissioners, in the name of current and future generations of residents, old-house lovers, and students of architectural history. I urge you to deny this relocation or demolition application. To me, these word games represent a distinction without a difference. To grant it would forever detract from Ypsilanti's leadership record in preservation, a record other communities, including my own, admire and respect.

Thank you.



## CALENDAR COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Calendar Committee, currently consisting of members Lisa Walters, Bill Nickels, and Rick Katon, seeks assistance in marketing the 1997 YHF calendar. Volunteers are needed to contact our calendar sponsors during the month of June and to help with sales during September and October. This is not a major time commitment but would be a great help to overworked committee members. For more information or to volunteer, call Lisa at 485-3683.

## WE NEED YOUR GOOD NEWS!

It's not too early to start thinking about news to share in the widely-read Good News Edition of the Heritage News, available at the Heritage Festival and always a popular and critical success. This is the only edition of the newsletter that many people read, and we reach a varied and extensive audience due to this festival distribution. We also attract new YHF members this way.

So start thinking now about the good things that have happened in Ypsilanti this year: downtown, in the Historic District, in your neighborhood, on your front porch. To suggest topics or supply copy, call Lisa Walters at 485-3683.

**The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation**  
**Heritage News**  
**102 N. Wallace Blvd.**  
Lisa Mills Walters, Editor (485-3683)  
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95-96



# Heritage News

Heritage News is the newsletter of the YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March and May; and distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market, and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.

**AUGUST 1996 \*\* GOOD NEWS EDITION!! \*\* Ypsilanti, MI**

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## **THE YPSILANTI HERITAGE FESTIVAL**

**August 16, 17, 18**

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### **SPECIAL EVENT: 19TH ANNUAL YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION HISTORIC HOME TOUR**

**DATE: Sunday, August 18, 1996, Noon to 5:00 p.m.**

**TICKETS: Adults \$8.00 - Seniors \$7.00 - Children Under 12 \$6.00**

Tickets available during Festival at YHF booths:

1. on the right at the entryway to Riverside Park
2. in front of the Historical Museum, 220 N. Huron

#### **FEATURING:**

**709 Cambridge**  
David and Linda Repasky  
English Tudor Revival—1925

This handsome house has the classic feature of cedar and stucco combined with brick and field stone. Among its many notable interior features are a molded plaster fireplace in the living room and an antique table that expands to twelve feet in the dining room.

**1207 Roosevelt**  
Jeff and Jennifer Goulet  
Colonial Revival—1939

Although simple in its design, this charming home is rich in color and style. The owner's needlework skills are evident in every room in cross stitch designs, handmade quilts, and drapery treatments. The home is also filled with an eclectic mixture of dolls, textiles, pottery, and glassware, as well as treasured family heirlooms.

**507 Fairview**  
Skip and Kyle Bunton  
Period Revival English Cotswold Cottage—1926

With its unusual rolled roof, eyebrow windows, and picturesque siting, this home presents an enchanting, almost storybook-like appearance to the street. It also features a lovely cottage garden, complete with woolly thyme, lavender, roses, and hostas.

**1015 W. Cross**  
Jim and Helen Vick  
Post-Victorian--1926

Architectural stylebooks refer to this home, with its wide eaves, ample porch, six-over-one windows, and overall simplicity, as a "Comfortable House." Its interior features include a stunning, contemporary master bath, complete with skylights, and a highly imaginative conversion of unused attic space into a "bachelor" suite.

**184-190 N. Washington**  
**Phoenix Place Apartments**  
Shoeb Shariff/ 190 Washington Associates  
Queen Anne (originally built as a duplex)--1894

This landmark building is appropriately named because, like the legendary bird, it literally rose from the ashes of a recent fire to live once more. Purchased by the current owners in 1993, it has undergone a total rehabilitation and now features eight imaginatively designed apartments.

Note--The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation will donate a portion of the proceeds from this year's tour to the **Riverside Arts Center**, located in the former Ypsilanti Masonic Temple, a 1909 Neo-Classical Revival Building.

### **IT HAPPENED IN YPSILANTI IN 1995-96**

The Heritage Foundation presents its **ANNUAL GOOD NEWS ISSUE**, reporting on some of the improvements that have occurred in Ypsilanti over the past year, for our own delight and that of our Festival visitors. It also allows us an opportunity to say Thank You to all of those who have helped make this a better place to live. This News issue is the Foundation's gift to everyone who cares for and about Ypsilanti.

### **RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER**

One of the biggest news stories of the year, of course, is the relocation of the offices of the Washtenaw Council for the Arts to the Riverside Arts Center, which we reported on in an earlier edition of the Heritage News. More recent news involves the Operations and Foundations Boards which met together in June for a strategic planning session. Goals and subcommittees were set. RAC staff and volunteers (and all community members, I'm sure!) are very excited about the streetscape improvements courtesy of the DDA and EDC (see related story). The parking lot and streetlights look great, and we're looking forward to the brick pavers out front.

Other great news: The Riverside Arts Center was named "best emerging arts group," winning a coveted Washtenaw Council for the Arts Annie Award. Bill Kinley, RAC Foundation Chair, also received an Annie for his continuous support of the arts.

Any YHF members with a need for a rental facility, please call the RAC at 480-ARTS or contact Barry La Rue (482-2327) or Peg Du Fresne (482-8666).

## CITY HALL FACADE RESTORATION

The City Hall restoration is going well. The Butler Company of Lansing received the contract for the job. In mid-July they applied stripper to the painted stone on the lower facade and power-washed the residue off. They needed to take care of that task to avoid damaging the new brick pavers which will soon be installed below.

In early August, they will start re-pointing the brick and preparing the upper surfaces for paint. By mid-October, the upper windows will be replaced, the brick painted, and we'll see new signs indicating "Ypsilanti City Hall" instead of "Savings Bank."

Stay tuned for further developments. Some ideas are being discussed concerning a trompe l'oeil finish for the lower facade until funding can be secured.

So instead of having what was once dubbed "the ugliest City Hall in Michigan," we have a work in progress, and we all look forward to the culmination of that progress.

## ARTRAIN COMES TO YPSILANTI

*The following story appears courtesy of the Riverside Arts Center Summer 1996 newsletter. Our thanks to writer and YHF member Tom Dodd.*

**Art in Celebration!**, featuring more than 30 artworks from The Smithsonian Associates collection in Washington, D.C., will mark the seventh stop of ARTRAIN, the nation's only touring art gallery, when it makes its August stop for the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival.

A special preview opening is set for Thursday, August 15, in conjunction with kick-off events for the Heritage Festival at which time supporters will enjoy the community's first viewing of the unique new installation on board ARTRAIN's three gallery cars and studio car. ARTRAIN will be open for group and individual tours Friday and Saturday from noon until 8:00 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

ARTRAIN's stop is hosted by the Ypsilanti Area Visitors & Convention Bureau, Ypsilanti Public Schools, and Riverside Arts Center and a grant from the Washtenaw Council for the Arts. The Chrysler Corporation has been named ARTRAIN's National Title Sponsor for the three-year *Art In Celebration!* tour.

Since opening its doors in 1971, ARTRAIN has welcomed more than 2.5 million visitors in 38 states. Both rural areas without museums and culturally diverse urban centers benefit from an ARTRAIN visit because the unique museum-in-a-train facility attracts non-traditional museum audiences as well as established "art lovers." ARTRAIN is particularly proud of its role in bringing attention to Ypsilanti's previously long-neglected Depot Town district and has paralleled its success in each of its visits since 1971. This year's tour is seen as a victory celebration for all of Ypsilanti as well as the staff of ARTRAIN.



## **DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE**

Some exciting changes are taking place in downtown Ypsilanti!

The Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority, in cooperation with the Ypsilanti Economic Development Council and the Michigan Department of Transportation, is making major improvements along the Michigan Avenue corridor in the downtown area. The project is known as the "Ypsilanti Streetscape" and is scheduled to be completed in October of 1996.

The focus of the streetscape is to make downtown Ypsilanti more pedestrian-friendly. Included in the project are new sidewalks with brick pavers in selected locations, trees, and Victorian style streetlights which complement the many vintage buildings in the downtown area.

We hope that you take the time to look at the improvements being made in downtown Ypsilanti (remembering that it is a work in progress!) and that you will return often to patronize the growing list of fine stores and eateries in the downtown area.

*Ed. Note: Thanks for the above report go to Ken Voigt of the DDA, interim replacement for Lori Ward. Lori is on maternity leave after the birth of daughter Callan Elise. Congratulations, Lori and Scott.*

### **NICE WORK:**

The great **Gothic Revival at 103 North Adams** (corner of Pearl) continues its rebirth as one of Ypsilanti's historic treasures, thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the **Tokarz brothers**.

At **205 N. Hamilton** removal of synthetic siding has revealed a wonderful house now freshly painted and bedecked with flowers.

Good things are happening to the wonderful "**European**" stucco house at **421 North Huron**, thanks to the sensitive efforts of **Ron Rupert**.

**Hedger Breed** deserves accolades for his rehab of **9-11 South Washington**--what an improvement!

## **HOLIDAY HOUSE RETURNS TO THE BREakey MANOR**

Following its very successful debut last year, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation's **Holiday House at the James Breakey Manor** returns for 1996. This year, the Holiday House will take place on Saturday, October 26th and Sunday, October 27th. A fundraiser for the Foundation, the Holiday House features the design and decorative talents of several Ypsilanti area businesses and Foundation members, who decorate table-tops, mantels, staircases, and entire rooms at the Breakey Manor in holiday-related themes. There will also be light refreshments and a walking tour of the surrounding downtown historic district. Plans are still preliminary at this time, but the Holiday House committee hopes to include an exhibit of local artists' work this year, as well. Tickets to the Holiday House are \$8.00 per person and will be available at the door. Look for more information on Holiday House '96 in the September issue of Heritage News.

## **OTHER GOOD NEWS**

**Richard Reid's Hair Station** and **Remington's by Design** have both expanded their spaces in Depot Town.

**Abe's Restaurant** at Michigan and Hamilton is sporting spiffy new awnings.

**The Mudd House**, a coffee and juice bar, has opened in the former Greyhound Bus Terminal station at W. Cross and Hamilton--already popular and thriving.

**Luca's Coney Island** has opened at 309 E. Michigan Avenue.

**Buffalo Wings Three** will open this fall in the Centennial Center, 24 Pearl Street.

**The Pizza Garden** building in Depot Town is being repaired and repainted and getting new signage.

When the new **Post Office** was built south of town, we feared we would lose the one downtown. Well, we not only still have a downtown Post Office, but now it's beautifully renovated--thanks, USPS!

The **American Legion** building on South Huron is sporting a good-looking new paint job.

North River Street is blossoming all down the boulevard, thanks to **Riverside Lawn and Garden's** donation of flowers and the planting efforts of the neighbors.

### **THANKS for ON-GOING COMMITMENT:**

Always, thanks to those business organizations who work so hard to keep Downtown and Depot Town looking good and thriving, including the **DDA, CBC, DTA, DTDDA, and the Mainstreet Project.**

To **AATA (Ann Arbor Transit Authority)** for maintaining the terminal at Pearl and Adams so well.

As ever, gratitude to **High Scope Educational Foundation** for its meticulous care of the great Hutchinson mansion on North River at Forest.

**Gary Urick** gets our awed appreciation for the super job he does as Market Master at the Freighthouse Farmers Market! All those tomatoes and petunias, banners and signs, onions and bananas, musicians and events, potatoes and zucchini, vendors and shoppers--how does he do it?

A gold star--no, a bushel of gold stars--to **Ezell Agnew**, who tirelessly keeps downtown streets free of litter and the multitude of downtown plantings looking so wonderful.

And special thanks to **all those good folks** who quietly and faithfully maintain their properties. Your efforts keep Ypsilanti looking good! If we missed mentioning you, know that your work is still much appreciated.







**PREVIEW OF COMING ATTRACTIONS:  
THE 1996/97 YHF GENERAL MEETING PROGRAMS**

**Tuesday, September 24, 7:30 p.m., Lincoln Later Elementary School**  
***Hidden Treasures: The WPA Murals at Lincoln School***  
**Dorothy Smith, Lincoln Schools Historian, and others**

In the depths of the Great Depression, the federal government's Works Progress Administration found ways to keep workers, including artists, from starving by providing them with commissioned projects. One such project, a series of murals depicting the rich history of the Lincoln Consolidated School District, is the subject of our September meeting program. Begun in 1934, the Lincoln murals are the work of artists and brothers Leon and Bronislau Makielski of Ann Arbor. The murals, which took two years to complete, were painted in the American Folk Art style, similar to the work done by Grandma Moses, but they have much more depth, detail, and realism. Since the 1960's the murals have very seldom been seen by the public, so our September meeting is a rare opportunity to see those hidden treasures. Our guides to those treasures are **Dorothy Smith**, Lincoln Schools Historian, who was a student at Lincoln when the murals were painted, and other former Lincoln students from that era. They'll give us an oral history of the murals, the artists, and the times.

**Tuesday, November 26, 7:30 p.m., Location TBA**  
***"Grande Dame" of the Great Lakes: The Restoration of the Steamer Columbia***  
**William M. Worden, President, The Steamer Columbia Foundation**

Question: What is 94 years old, 216' long overall, a National Historic Landmark, and for many years carried hundreds of thousands of passengers on long, leisurely trips to Bob-Lo Island Amusement Park? Answer: The steamer *Columbia*, and the restoration of this historic vessel is the subject of our program this November. The older of the two Bob-Lo boats, the *Columbia* was built in Wyandotte and Detroit in 1902. After many years carrying passengers to and from Bob-Lo Island, the *Columbia* was taken out of service earlier in this decade. Her fate remained uncertain until recently when she was acquired by The Steamer Columbia Foundation, a non-profit corporation. We are indeed fortunate to have as our November speaker **William M. Worden**, President of The Steamer Columbia Foundation, who will tell us about the history of the *Columbia* and the Foundation's plans to restore her as a museum piece and return her to part-time active service for charters, excursions, and events. Whether you're a steamship fan or (like this writer) just have fond memories of the Bob-Lo boats, you won't want to miss this meeting!





**Tuesday, January 28, 7:30 p.m., the Freighthouse in Depot Town**  
***Let's Get on a Street Car! The History of the Ypsilanti-Ann Arbor Interurban***  
**Dr. H. Mark Hildebrandt, Founder,**  
**The Ann Arbor Train and Trolley Watchers**

Between 1880 and 1890, electric traction with an overhead trolley wire was developed and rapidly supplanted the earlier cable lines and horse cars. By 1891, Michigan had its first electric interurban line, the Ypsilanti-Ann Arbor run, and service on this line continued until 1929. It ran from downtown Ypsilanti at Washington and Michigan (then Congress), out Cross Street and Packard to the edge of Ann Arbor, where passengers transferred to a city street car. Our January meeting speaker, Mark Hildebrandt, will tell us all about the colorful history of the Ypsilanti-Ann Arbor interurban, with slides and memorabilia from the era. A native of Ann Arbor, Mark's interest in trains and trolleys began in the fifth grade, and in the 1950's he founded the Ann Arbor Trains and Trolley Watchers. Join us for what should be a fascinating program for interurban enthusiasts and local history buffs alike.

**Tuesday, March 25, 7:30 p.m., Ladies Literary Club**  
***Three Hundred Years of Quilts in America***  
**Barbara Kilbourn, Quilt Artist and Member, UM Faculty Women's Quilters**

Since early Colonial times, quilting has served as both an avenue of personal expression and as a reflection of cultural change. In her slide lecture, our March meeting speaker, **Barbara Kilbourn**, presents a historical perspective on a variety of quilt styles popular at different times during the past three hundred years. Barbara will also examine how these quilts related to the social, political, economic, and artistic developments of their times. Since 1981, when she began quilting, Barbara has completed more than sixty quilts, from bed-sized to miniatures, and her quilts include both original designs and original adaptation of traditional patterns. Her work has been exhibited in numerous local shows, as well as in Lancaster, PA, Indianapolis, Houston, and Paducah, KY. A teacher of quilting since 1988, Barbara is an engaging speaker who brings the history of her art form to life.

**Mark your calendars with these dates! As always, general meetings of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation are open to the public, and refreshments are provided.**

### **YHF CALENDAR PRODUCTION CEASES**

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Calendar Committee regretfully announces that, due to low sales and a lack of volunteers, we will no longer be producing our annual calendar. We would, however, like to thank those businesses and individuals who generously sponsored the last two calendars, and those loyal YHF members and others who showed their support of the Foundation and historic preservation by purchasing the calendar year after year.

## **RECREATION PARK RESTORATION**

Thanks to successful fundraising efforts and strong neighborhood support, residents will see significant improvements in Rec. Park toward the end of the summer. As of June 26, the total amount raised for park improvements was \$15,126.94. (This included \$9000 in direct contributions from Normal Park residents.) The Rec. Park Restoration Committee also received \$7500 from the City of Ypsilanti out of the 1996-97 fiscal year budget, giving them a grand total of \$22,626.94 to spend this year and enabling them to accomplish several of the goals from Phase I of the planned park improvements.

What we can expect to see this summer:

- A new play structure with two towers, a bridge, and multiple slides and climbers, geared to pre-schoolers.
- A new swing set with two belt swings and two tot swings.
- Demolition of the cement block portion of the picnic shelter and repair and painting of the remaining structure. (Lighting will be maintained.)
- Removal of fence between Chapelle School yard and Rec. Park (already gone!).
- Removal of unsafe play equipment and painting of the other existing swingset.

The remaining money will be saved and put toward the jogging path which was also planned as part of the Phase I project. The committee will continue its fundraising efforts through the year and hopes to have Phase I completed next summer. The commemorative plaques for everyone who donated \$100 or more will be installed next summer also.

*Ed. Note: Thanks to Carol Leyshock, NPNA Rec. Park Committee Chair and YHF member, for the above information.*

## **PROSPECT PARK/EAST SIDE ASSOCIATION NEWS**

On the other side of town we find the revival of the East Side Neighborhood Association, which we reported on at some length in a previous edition of the Heritage News. This enthusiastic group of neighbors is busy with meetings and numerous projects, including the Heritage Festival parade.

Eagerly awaited improvements are underway in Prospect Park, which also serves as the playground for Adams School. This summer we'll see extensive changes in recreation facilities, new play equipment, a walking path, and landscaping at the north end, and we look forward to improvements to the south end next summer.

## **YPSILANTI WELCOMES NEW CITY MANAGER**

After a lengthy and complex process, the Ypsilanti City Council selected Edward Koryzno, formerly of Grand Haven, as our new city manager. Mr. Koryzno and his family purchased a home in Normal Park, and his four children will be attending Ypsilanti Public Schools. Mr. Koryzno assumed his position on July 1 and is quickly becoming familiar with Ypsilanti. We welcome him, his wife Beth, and their children: Andrew, Christine, Peter, and Aleksandra.

Since Mr. Koryzno's arrival, Bob Slone, interim city manager, has returned to his former position as City Clerk. At this time we'd like to thank Mr. Slone for helping us out through the difficult past year. Thanks also to all city staffers who help keep things running smoothly in Ypsilanti.

## **FRIENDS OF THE FREIGHTHOUSE**

The fledgling Depot Town group Friends of the Freighthouse will be producing T-shirts featuring artist Gary Markley's pen and ink drawing of the depot and the Freighthouse as viewed from the signal tower. Cost of the shirts is \$15, with proceeds going towards the Friends' funds to preserve and restore the Freighthouse. Watch for these shirts on sale at the farmer's market/Freighthouse during the Heritage Festival. For more information about Friends of the Freighthouse, call 483-1480.

## **HOMESTORIES**

Interested in finding out more about the history of your home, but haven't got the time or don't know where to begin? Wendy Gouine, Normal Park resident and creator of **Homestories**, can help.

**Homestories** is a service Wendy offers whereby she researches your home, its history, and its previous occupants, and puts it all together in a narrative, rather like a biography of a home. Wendy got the idea for **Homestories** when she went to the Ypsilanti Historical Museum archives to check out her new house. There she found several tantalizing clues and started to follow up on them.

As Wendy says, "Everybody wants to know who lived in the house before them, but few have the time to pore over microfiches of newspapers, wait in line at Vital Records, or wander around Highland Cemetery clutching a map and bugging the groundskeepers!" She says that the documents that contain the soul of your house are scattered through several locations, including the archives at the Historical Society and Eastern Michigan University, and the public libraries of both Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.

When you order your **Homestory**, an extensive process begins, one that includes wills, mortgage documents, tax papers, abstracts, wedding announcements, and obituaries. Wendy can gather these puzzle pieces for you and put together a picture of your home. A narrated lifeline of your property, complete with unique anecdotes and scholarly references, can be ordered for \$50.

It takes Wendy about a month to do one **Homestory**, primarily because she does it during her daughter's naptime. She looks on this as a hobby, one that she says keeps her brain from "turning to oatmeal." The added benefit, she says, is that she gets "to meet such great people...living and dead."

For a sample **Homestory**, call Wendy at 482-1575.

### **Homestories**



---

Wendy Gouine  
WGouine@AOL.com  
313.482.1575

## THE HUTCHINSON HOUSE

*Ed. Note: The following story originally appeared in the Washtenaw Daily Times on May 6, 1902, during the construction of the Hutchinson House. It is reprinted here in its entirety and original form. We thank YHF member James Mann for his research and for keeping us supplied with his findings.*

### **"The New Mansion and Old Homestead: The Father of the Trading Stamp Business Builds A Palace"**

From dancing master to bonanza king, and from an ordinary log cabin to the proprietorship of palatial residences is something few men attain in this world of fierce business competition. Yet such was the result of an Ypsilanti boy's originality, the result of Shelley B. Hutchinson's acumen. And the best and most appreciated part of it all is that the millionaire trading stamp merchant whom Ypsilantians proudly call "our fellow townsman" is still as affable and as easy of approach as when he stood at the foot of the ladder of wealth and fame. It is a little over thirty-seven years since Mr. Hutchinson made his earthly debut in the small country cabin shown in the accompanying engraving. It is only six years since the ingenious young man Hutchinson, who had become a prosperous teacher of dancing in the West, but who was then in Battle Creek, hit upon the beginnings of a business that has brought him untold wealth and whose complex scope takes in the globe with its ramifications. This is a story of Yankee cleverness that outclasses even the fairy tales of Scheherazade. To some there is a glamour of luck about it, but it seems that the obscure young dancing-master of the early nineties had always been a clever schemer and was simply getting ready to launch his bold financial plans upon the world. The dreaming vendor of Harounal Raschid days, while cogitating o'er wealth-to-be, struck his luckless foot against his sole basket of fancy ware, thereby dashing both hopes and china in pieces. Mr. Hutchinson, on the other hand, planned with sure-footed accuracy and was ready for his opportunity when it came. He was doing well as a teacher of dancing, but there was another and a broader field for him. "The American people love to dance!" might well have been his thought. Certain it is that he has set a pace for the business world that is hard, very hard to imitate. His first trading stamp store he established in Jackson. It was a modest beginning, but the business grew so rapidly from April, 1896, to January, 1897, that Mr. Hutchinson decided to expand the business. He took in as a partner Thomas Sperry, a traveling man of whom he had formerly bought silverware for his store. They then went to Bridgeport, Conn., where the business was wonderfully successful. Representatives were soon sent out to introduce the business into all the cities of America. S. B. Hutchinson went to San Francisco. Here he met with strenuous opposition. Arrested twenty times on false charges to frighten him out of the business, he finally triumphed over all the opposing forces. From here he went to Sydney, Australia, but although the trade was good the people and climate did not suit him and he sold out to return to America. In 1899 he married Miss Clara Usinger of San Francisco, whose parents formerly lived in Ypsilanti where they graduated from the Normal College in its early days. Miss Usinger had answered the trading-stamp firm's advertisement for a typewriter and stenographer and had secured the position. Mr. Hutchinson became interested in her first when he learned that her parents had lived in his hometown away back in Michigan, and he called at her home. That was the beginning. His interest increased from the thousand and one causes which go to make up a beautiful romance and, in short, the wedding took place on his return from Australia. A bright little auburn-haired lass is the result of this happy union. With Mr. Hutchinson, the child can claim a direct line of relationship to the father of the great captain, Miles Standish, immortalized by Longfellow. Mr. Hutchinson's mother it is who stands in this line of descent. Her mother formerly had a great number of the home utensils of Miles Standish which were



bequeathed by her to the Smithsonian Institution. Mr. Hutchinson's business has grown until it now has a scope almost beyond description. In New York alone sixteen bookkeepers are busy with the firm's accounts. The trading-stamp king himself lived in New York after his marriage, but becoming tired of the life there and in fact downright homesick for Michigan, he sent word to his father here that he would be home on a visit. Upon his arrival, he announced that his household furniture was on the way. A few days later he said to his father: "I think I will build a house here or in Detroit. Which place would you prefer?" "Here, of course," said the father. The son thought so too, and had the plans drawn at once. The building was commenced last August and will take five months more to finish. In the meantime, Mr. Hutchinson has lived here. Although he might have a hundred stenographers to conduct his correspondence, if he chose, Mrs. Hutchinson still writes his letters as in the days of old. The bonanza king is very fond of Ypsilanti and has invested considerable money in local enterprises. "He will stay right here in his home town, I think," said his father recently. "No inducements could cause him to leave."

The little log house shown in the accompanying cut is the place where our millionaire merchant was born. It is still standing on the old homestead, three and one-half miles northeast of this city.

Mr. Hutchinson's most recent dwelling is the palatial home shown in the picture. Far from its completion at present, the cut cannot do justice to even one phase of this handsome house, which will be without question the finest in Michigan. Like Mr. Hutchinson himself, it is undoubtedly the most original of its kind in the world in its general makeup. Standing on a bluff in the northeast side of the city, it commands a splendid view of the whole town and surrounding country. Each view of the exterior would show some special feature—from the fine baseboulders of the porte-cochere to the topmost turret crown.

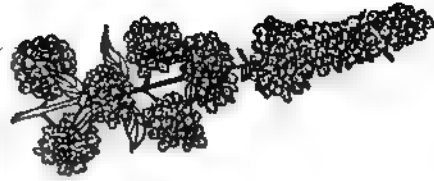
*See the September issue of Heritage News for the next installment of the Washtenaw Daily Times 1902 report on the Hutchinson House.*

The Hutchinson Home, Ypsilanti, Mich.



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**THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO MAKES YPSILANTI A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE: OUR POLICE FORCE, FIRE FIGHTERS, BUILDING INSPECTORS, CITY MANAGER, CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS, AND VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE PROUD TO BE FROM YPSILANTI.**

**MEMBERSHIP IN THE FOUNDATION**

**REMEMBER:** dues are due in October. If you are a dues paying member now, you should be receiving your billing soon. If you would like to join the Foundation, send your check, payable to the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation, to Lisa Mills Walters, Treasurer, 102 N. Wallace Blvd., Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Individuals: \$10; Family: \$15; Contributing: \$25; Sustaining: \$100; Life: \$1000. **HELP MAKE HISTORY!**

**The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation**

**Heritage News**

**102 N. Wallace Blvd.**

**Editor: Lisa Mills Walters (485-3683)**

**Contributing Editors: Peg Du Fresne, Jane Schmiedeke, Barry La Rue**



Ypsilanti Historic Museum  
220 N. Huron St.  
Ypsilanti MI 48197

# Heritage News

Heritage News is the newsletter of the YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March and May; and distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market, and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.

September 1996

Ypsilanti, MI

**MEETING:** Tuesday, September 24, 1996--7:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Lincoln Later (Brick) Elementary School, Heritage Room  
(See map following page)

**PROGRAM:** "Hidden Treasures: The WPA Murals at Lincoln Schools"

**SPEAKER:** Dorothy Hitchingham Smith, Lincoln Schools Historian,  
and others

In the depths of the Great Depression, the federal government's Works Progress Administration found ways to keep workers, including artists, from starving by providing them with commissioned projects. One such project, a series of murals depicting the rich history of the Lincoln Consolidated School District, is the subject of our September 24th meeting program. Begun in 1934, the Lincoln murals are the work of artists and brothers Leon and Bronislau Makielski of Ann Arbor. The murals, which took two years to complete, were painted in the American Folk Art style, similar to the work done by Grandma Moses, but they have much more depth, detail, and realism.

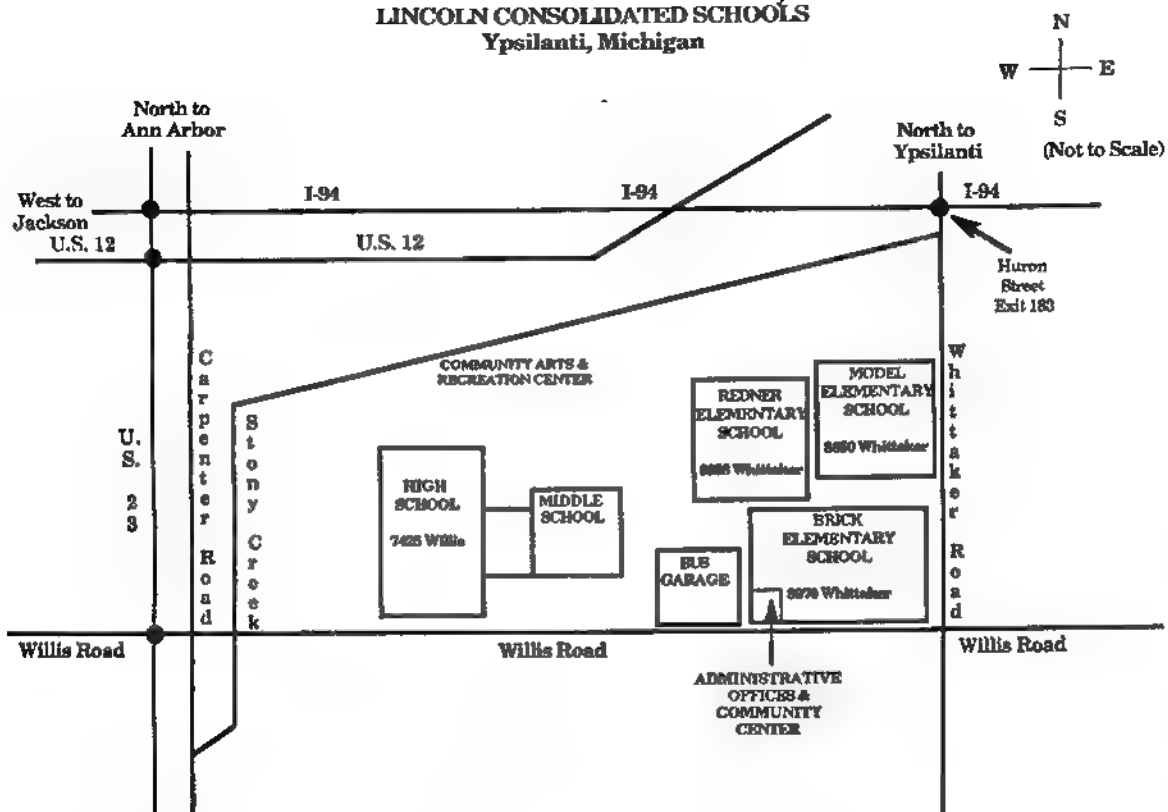
Since the 1960's the murals have very seldom been seen by the public, so our September meeting is a rare opportunity to see these hidden treasures. Our guides to these treasures are Dorothy Hitchingham Smith, Lincoln Schools Historian, who was a student at Lincoln when the murals were painted, and other former Lincoln students from that era.

Dorothy is the author of Footsteps From the Past, a book for young readers, written in 1975. Footsteps From The Past recounts the history of Augusta Township from its wilderness days through its settlement in the early-to-mid 19th century to the early 20th century and the creation of the Lincoln Consolidated School System. Along the way, it describes Augusta's earliest settlements: Eaton Mills, Paint Creek, Willis, Stoney Creek, and Whittaker, and the thirteen rural one-room schools, built between 1844 and 1899, that eventually joined together to form the Lincoln School System.

Drawing on their intimate knowledge of the Lincoln area and its colorful past, Dorothy and the other former Lincoln students will give us an oral history of the murals and, if time permits, of Augusta Township itself, and the story behind the formation of the Consolidated School System.

We hope to see you there. As always, membership is not required, so bring a friend.  
**Refreshments WILL Be Served.**

**LINCOLN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS**  
Ypsilanti, Michigan



*Notice to our guests: the elevator in this building is not working, so visitors will have to climb three flights of stairs. We apologize for any inconvenience.*

### **WILLIAM CUMMINGS HOUSE HEADLINES VISTULA HISTORIC DISTRICT'S PREMIERE HOME TOUR**

In May of this year we featured a story about the William Cummings House, a 17-room Second Empire Style mansion, built in 1857, that is now operating as an elegant bed and breakfast home in the heart of Toledo's Vistula Historic District. We recommended then that our readers stop by and check it out. If you haven't yet had the opportunity, now's your chance! On **Sunday, October 6th**, The Cummings House will be featured in **The Premiere Home Tour, 1996**, the Vistula Historic District's first annual home tour.

Also on tour are the exclusive apartments of Westminster Row, a grand Italianate townhouse "row," built in 1876. Known as "Suicide Flats" in the mid-1980's because of its deplorable condition, Westminster Row has undergone an amazing transformation and is now a very prestigious address.

Four other historic properties round out the tour, including the Salem Lutheran Church, a Gothic Revival, neighborhood landmark; an Italian Villa style home, c. 1865; a Boston Strict style home, c. 1907; and a modest working man's home, c. 1902.

The Premiere Home Tour, 1996, is the major fundraiser for the newly-formed Vistula Neighborhood Association, and the proceeds from the tour will support the Association's plans for the further revitalization of Vistula.

Advance discount tickets for the tour can be purchased locally at Materials Unlimited in Ypsilanti. Advance ticket prices are \$7.00 for adults, \$6.00 for seniors, and \$5.00 for children under twelve. On tour day, tickets are available in front of the Cummings House Bed & Breakfast, 1022 N. Superior Street, beginning at 11:30 a.m. Ticket prices on tour day are \$10.00 for adults, \$8.00 for seniors, and \$7.00 for children under twelve. For more information, call (419) 244-3219.

## 1996 HISTORIC HOME TOUR ANOTHER SUCCESS

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation's 1996 Historic Home Tour, held on Sunday, August 18th, proved to be another successful event, with nearly picture-perfect weather! More than 500 people went on tour. Both our advance ticket sales efforts and our sponsorship/patronage campaigns continued their upward trends. As a result, we met our fundraising goal for 1996, which enables us to continue our support of the Foundation's ongoing programs and to donate a portion of the tour proceeds to the Riverside Arts Center to help underwrite the costs of a new building sign.

On behalf of the Home Tour Committee, I would like to thank the owners and residents of this year's locations for graciously making their properties available: David and Linda Repasky, 709 Cambridge; Jeff and Jennifer Goulet, 1207 Roosevelt; Skip and Kyle Bunton, 507 Fairview; Jim and Helen Vick, 1015 W. Cross; and Shoeb Shariff/190 Washington Associates, Phoenix Place Apartments.

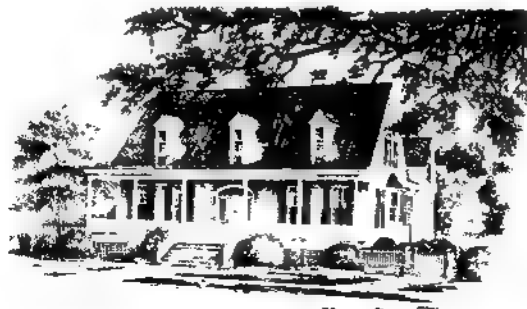
We would also like to thank all of our volunteer guides and ticket sellers. It takes, on average, about 100 volunteers to make the tour work, and we couldn't do it without you.

Special thanks go out once again to Lisa and Eric Walters, our very hard-working Ticket Chairs. To Lisa Walters, Barry La Rue, and Denis Schmiedeke, we say "thank you" for all the research you did on tour properties. A special thank you to Rick Katon for his brochure and commemorative photographs. Thanks, also, to the team of Rick and Carol Leyshock, Barbara and Alan Saxton, Al Heezen and Wanda McGlasson, and Bill and Karen Nickels for a spectacular post-tour party.

Finally, I'd like to issue my personal thanks to the members of the Home Tour Committee. Sharon Beckett, Jonnie Bryant, Julie Fisher, Jennifer Goulet, Barry La Rue, Nancie Loppnow, Mary Ann McDonald, Barbara Saxton, Jane Schmiedeke, Penny Schreiber, Grace Sweeney, and Jane Van Bolt. These individuals are responsible for locating and selecting the homes on tour, serving as chief guides, soliciting sponsorships/patronages, and organizing and training the volunteer guides. **CONGRATULATIONS, GROUP, AND THANKS TO YOU ALL!**

Peg Du Fresne  
Chair, 1996 Historic Home Tour Committee

P.S. 1997 is the 20th anniversary of the Ypsilanti Historic Home Tour, and we plan to make the 1997 tour something special! So, if you're interested in joining the Committee in any capacity, please contact Peg Du Fresne between now and January 1, 1997, at 482-8666.



## **HOLIDAY HOUSE '96 TO FEATURE CONTEMPORARY DOLL AND QUILT SHOW**

An exciting exhibit of contemporary dolls, quilts, and clothing is the special feature at this year's **Holiday House at the James Breakey Manor**, to be held on **Saturday, October 26th, and Sunday, October 27th**. The doll and quilt display will showcase artwork by members of Paradigm Quilters, a group of noted local artists, including Mary Gentry, Sue Heinz, Garland Lewis, Mary Bajcz, Clare Teagan, and others.

In its second year, this fundraiser for the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation will also, once again, feature the talents of several Ypsilanti area designers, decorators, and florists, who will turn the Breakey Manor into a Holiday wonderland. At press time, Holiday House participants include Remington's by Design, The Parish House Inn, Me 'N' My Sisters Country Store, Treasures Boutique and Designs on You, Keller & Stein Florists and Greenhouse, Tamara L. Kutter-Simple Treasures, The Ypsilanti Historical Society, and members of the Foundation.

Holiday House '96 will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are available at the door and in advance at Remington's by Design and Me 'N' My Sisters Country Store. Admission is \$8.00 per person and includes the tour of the designers' displays, the doll and quilt show, light refreshments, and an optional walking tour of the surrounding downtown historic district. For more information, call the James Breakey Manor at (313) 483-2300.

**VOLUNTEERS:** Take part in this successful fundraiser for the Foundation and enjoy some of the holiday magic yourself! Peg Du Fresne (Co-Chair of the Holiday House, along with Mary Todorov of the Breakey Manor) is recruiting volunteers to either sell tickets, greet visitors, or provide floor security for the displays. Contact Peg at 482-8666 for more information. Barry La Rue is once again coordinating the walking tours and is recruiting volunteers to act as tour guides. Contact Barry at 482-2327 for more information.

**All volunteers will receive complimentary admission to the Holiday House.**

### *The James Breakey Manor*



*125 N. Huron St. Ypsilanti, MI 48197*

*(313) 483-2300*

## THE HUTCHINSON HOUSE: PART TWO

*In the August edition of the Heritage News, we brought you a story which had originally appeared in the May 6, 1902, edition of the Washtenaw Daily Times. It was the tale of the "father of the trading stamp business," Shelley B. Hutchinson, who was in the process of building a home in Ypsilanti. Space prevented us, however, from including the next day's news report which focused on the home itself, so herewith is the next installment for which you've been so patiently waiting.*

### "Gorgeous Interior: Hutchinson Residence Inside Finish"

Mr. Stephen Hutchinson, Shelley's father, and a very interesting gentleman he is, showed the Times man through the building recently. A few details of the things seen are given below. We entered the reception hall, which is in green oak. There are eight pillars around the central oval of this room and sixty beautiful electric lights. The dome will be decorated in metal-leaf in glazes figured. The reception room will be decorated in yellow and blue with a cloud effect and cupids for the ceiling. There are no doors on the first floor. Advancing from the reception hall by two upright regular steps we are in the parlor, which is in white and gold. This, as all the other principal rooms, has leaded-glass windows in beautiful figures especially appropriate to the particular places for which they are intended. The parlor is separated from the grand hall by a pillar effect. On the left we find the Moorish music-room, of natural oak in silver and green decorations, and farther, the library in mahogany. Off the library is the conservatory with its glass dome, and beyond that a piazza, 17 x 20, in stone finish.

The dining hall, 17 X 22, is a very beautiful room in dark Flemish oak. An idea of the detail employed throughout the building can be seen in the thirty-six different styles of moulding which go to harmoniously complete a feature of this room. The familiar egg-and-tongue pattern is used throughout the building with a hundred variations. We have already noticed that every room is an outside one and will find this true of the whole mansion. There are other rooms on the first floor that are worthy of especial mention, but we will pass now by means of the grand staircase to the second floor. When completed, the elevator, which runs from basement to third story, may be used. We note, in passing, the beautiful leaded window near the base of the stairway. On the second floor we are taken first to the bird's-eye maple tower room where we may have a splendid view of the surrounding city. Nearby is Mrs. Hutchinson's room, in sycamore, with fine mantel and a nook and closet with French plate mirror panels. And speaking of closets, we are informed that every nook and corner of this original structure is turned to some use. In the course of our visit we are shown a vast number of such places--from perfectly equipped rooms only big enough to hang a broom in to comfortable wardrobe repositories. There are three mantels to add to the cheer of the second floor.

Mr. Hutchinson's room shows splendid elegance in red birch of natural finish. His bath-room has a water scene on the leaded glass windows. The unique bath, like all others in the house, is of solid porcelain, 1,500 pounds in weight, with pipes of silver. There are three special bath-rooms on this floor and the next, each tiled five feet high by way of wainscoting. The bath-rooms, kitchen, pantry, hall and swimming pool have tiled floors. The large ballroom (26 x 38) on the second floor has an orchestra alcove and a pretty gallery and nook where those who are not dancing may watch the festive scene below. There is a splendid promenade around the south side balcony, just off the ballroom. We leave the other rooms of the second floor undescribed and ascend to the third, where are found a great many bedrooms and a cosy den for those of Mr. Hutchinson's friends who smoke. Here we are introduced to Mr. Merinus, the Ypsilanti superintendent of construction. "All the men on this work are Ypsilanti people," said Mr. Merinus. "Mr





# Heritage News

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November 1996

Ypsilanti, MI

**MEETING:** Tuesday, November 26, 1996--7:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
The Great Hall--Lower Level  
120 N. Huron, Ypsilanti

**PROGRAM:** "*Grande Dame*" of the Great Lakes: The Restoration of The Steamer Columbia

**SPEAKER:** William M. Worden, President  
The Steamer Columbia Foundation

Question. What is 94 years old, 216' long overall, a National Historic Landmark, and for many years carried hundreds of thousands of passengers on long, leisurely trips to Bob-Lo Island Amusement Park? Answer: The steamer *Columbia*, and the restoration of this historic vessel is the subject of our next meeting program.

The older of the two Bob-Lo boats, the *Columbia* was built in 1902 by the Detroit Shipbuilding Company. After many years carrying passengers to and from Bob-Lo Island, the *Columbia* was taken out of service in 1991. At that time, she was the oldest operating passenger steamer in the nation. In fact, she and her running mate, the *Ste. Claire*, are the last of a national type of excursion vessel, having survived longer than comparable vessels elsewhere in this country.

*Columbia's* fate remained uncertain until recently when she was acquired by The Steamer Columbia Foundation, a non-profit corporation formed in 1991. We are indeed fortunate to have as our November speaker William M. Worden, Director of the Historic Designation Advisory Board of the City of Detroit and President of The Steamer Columbia Foundation.

Bill Worden's extensive knowledge of preservation, restoration, and maritime history, as well as his practical experience as a sailor, make him well suited to take the helm of the *Columbia* restoration project. After graduating from Ohio State University with a major in Art History, he continued his studies both in this country and in England, at the London Summer School of the Victorian Society and at the Architectural Conservation Summer School at West Dean College, near Chichester. He has since gone on to a very active career in historic preservation. He has served as Administrative Coordinator of the Detroit/Urban Conservation project, Chairman of the Board of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, and member of the Board of Directors of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to name just a few of his many appointments. A past president of the Indian Village Association, Bill and his wife, Barbara, reside in the Village and are currently restoring their large Edwardian home.

(continued)

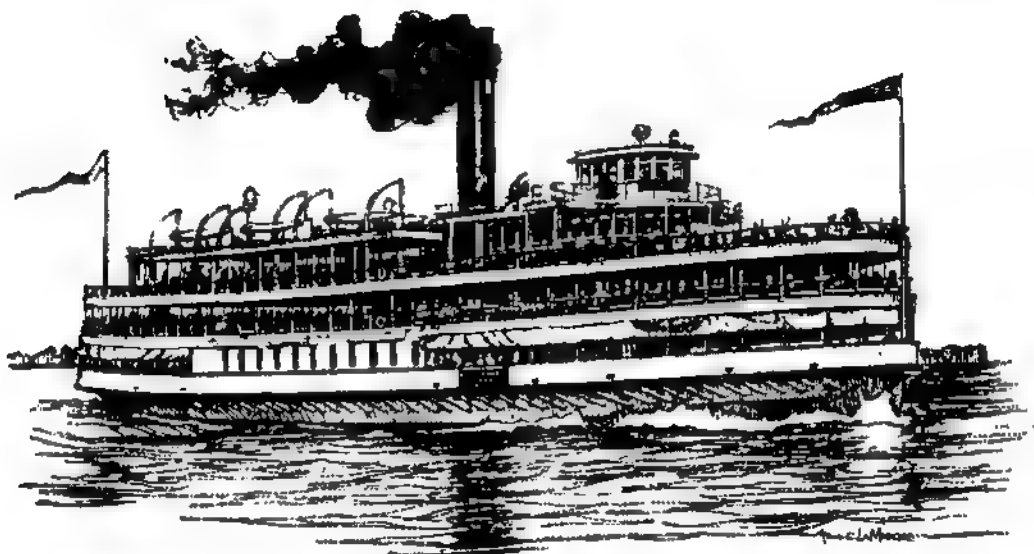
In his slide presentation, Bill will tell us about the history of the *Columbia* and the Foundation's plans to restore her as a museum piece and return her to part-time active service for charters, excursions, and events. The Steamer Columbia Foundation's short-term goal is to return the vessel to certification for operation; the long-term goal is restoration of the vessel, as closely as present regulations permit, to a state resembling her original, elegant condition. The target date for completion of her comprehensive restoration is 2002, *Columbia's* centennial year.

Whether you're a steamship fan or just have fond memories of the Bob-Lo boats, you won't want to miss this meeting! As always, membership is not required, so why not bring a friend?

**Refreshments Will Be Served.**

### **COLUMBIA MEMENTOS AVAILABLE**

Acquire a memento of the Steamer *Columbia* and help in the fundraising efforts for her restoration! The Steamer Columbia Foundation has produced a black and white, limited-edition print of the *Columbia* as she was in 1902. The price for this print, which is signed and numbered by the artist, Paul C. LaMarre, is \$25.00. In addition, the *Columbia* image has been printed on tee-shirts, priced at \$9.00-\$11.00, and on sweatshirts, priced at \$18.00-\$20.00, depending on size. A color, limited edition print of the *Columbia* as she was in 1903 is currently in production. Available soon, the price was not determined at press time. Bill Worden will have black & white prints, tee-shirts, and sweatshirts available for sale on the night of November 26.



The *Columbia* as she was in 1902, and as she will look when completely restored.  
Credit: The Steamer Columbia Foundation.

## **GOING, GOING, GONE: CORKTOWN LOSES ANOTHER TREASURE** by Rosalyn Johnson

*reprinted with permission from the  
Metropolitan Detroit Preservation League News*

"Going, going, gone" are the anxiously awaited words of a successful bidder at an auction. Unfortunately, it is also the sad epitaph of many historic structures not only in Metropolitan Detroit but also across the country. In our winter 1995 newsletter, we reported on one such building in Corktown on Trumbull Avenue. The Italianate home was built in the 1870s and survived the invention of the automobile, two World Wars, plus the challenges of a diversified and changing urban area. From the front steps one could view Tiger Stadium in its heyday. This past spring, the house was demolished to build a parking lot.

Going (1) involves the purchase or acquisition of a property by a person(s) without the intent, foresight, or ability to restore/renovate a historic structure. Going (2) facilitates the conscientious act of letting a property demolish itself through neglect by either the elements or by man (vandalism). Gone is the final crush of the wrecker's ball or downfall by implosion.

There are ghosts of buildings long gone that reverberate in our memories. How often when describing something near West Grand Boulevard and Grand River does one say, "You know where Olympia used to be?..." And heads around a table nod in unison, experiencing a collective remembrance.

What is this maudlin fascination with the destructive forces of man? Today, one finds families making "a day" of the demolition, when major structures that once housed or employed hundreds of people are destroyed. They pack folding chairs to sit on plus coolers and thermoses to refresh themselves while they wait. Visual images come to mind of the Romans awaiting the lions and the Christians. Will Cedar Point and Kings Island be threatened by this new sport?

Possibly we are too enthralled by such movies as "Terminator" or "Escape from L.A." where to be a macho action hero one must destroy all that stands in one's way. Perhaps it is simply much easier to participate in the destructive phase of a building than in the creative phase. After all, creativity involves complex thought, motivation, compromise, inventiveness, and problem-solving.

As a practical preservation advocate, one realizes not all historic structures are worthy of being saved. However, the words "going, going, gone" are echoed much too often.

*Ed. note: Thanks to YHF board member Peg Du Fresne for bringing this article to our attention. The following book review comes to us from the same source.*



**THE GEOGRAPHY OF NOWHERE:  
THE RISE AND DECLINE OF AMERICA'S MAN-MADE LANDSCAPE**  
by James Howard Kunstler  
Touchstone Books, 303pp., \$11  
reviewed by Charlie Zink

The Geography of Nowhere pursues America's history from a place of small towns with active main streets and neighborhoods where everyone knew each other, to a homogenous landscape where practically every place is like the one we just left behind. Cities are described as dead zones, and the suburban and rural sprawl are looked at as nothing more than throwaway cinder block commercial architecture surrounded by acres of asphalt parking lots.

Kunstler recounts in a humorous way how early Americans come to develop large land tracts, similar to those of the royal landlords of England. He documents how developers, with the help of local zoning boards, have virtually destroyed most American cities and the surrounding rich farmlands by "creating" a demand for new housing located outside the city limits.

"Cities, towns, and countryside were ravaged equally, as were the lesser order of things within them--neighborhoods, buildings, streets, farms--and there is scant refuge from the disorders that ensued," says Kunstler in the first chapter of the book. He goes on to describe how the process leading up to this destruction "is so poorly understood that there are few words to even describe it. Suburbia. Sprawl. Overdevelopment. Conurbation. Megalopolis."

Much of the blame, according to Kunstler, can be linked to the development of the automobile. He documents General Motors' role in the elimination of affordable mass transit as well as the car's major role in creating human isolation that many of us live in today. Kunstler invites us to take a critical look at the treeless suburban neighborhoods, dedicated to the automobile, where homes have been developed with the garage as the focal point. Homes that lack an inviting porch that had encouraged human interaction in the past. Even sidewalks have been eliminated, adding to the "isolated automobile suburbs."

Kunstler writes, "It's said that Henry Ford felt pretty bad late in life about what his cars had done to the life of America."

The author selects and writes about three cities that are clearly different yet, he believes, represent a type. The first being Detroit. "I have picked Detroit because it is the worst case of an old industrial metropolis gone to hell." The second he looks at is Portland, Oregon, because of its progressive trends in American city life, especially in urban planning. The third is Los Angeles, "the quintessential city of the twentieth century, wholeheartedly dedicated to cars."

You can imagine what is written about Detroit.

But the future of American life revolving around the automobile is not all gloom and doom paved over in suburban sprawl and auto gridlock. According to Kunstler, there are developers and architects who are creating "human scale" developments like those left behind in our cities and small towns. He cites examples of the Traditional Neighborhood Development, Pedestrian Pockets, and Land Trusts being established to save rural landscapes.

The book he has written is an attempt to discover how and why it happened, and what we might do about it in the future. It is a worthwhile and fascinating read for anyone interested in urban planning, historic preservation, and the social problems that the automobile has created.

"I have lived my entire life in America's high imperial moment. During this epoch of stupendous wealth and power, we have managed to ruin our greatest cities, throw away our small towns, and impose over the countryside a joyless junk habit which we can no longer afford to support. Indulging in a fetish of commercialized individualism, we did away with the public realm, and with nothing left but private life in our private homes and private cars, we wonder what happened to the spirit of community. We created a landscape of scary places and became a nation of scary people," writes Kunstler.

### **CITY HALL UPDATE**

We were all glad to see the cheese-grater "going, going, gone," and things continue to improve at One S. Huron St. Anyone who has walked or driven through downtown Ypsilanti recently has noticed that the brick upper stories of City Hall have been repointed, primed, and painted. The tar stains near the upper portion of the stone have been removed. The order for new windows in the third and fourth stories has been placed, with installation to occur as soon as they arrive. Once the windows are in place they will receive an accent color finishing touch. It is hoped that there will be enough money in the contingency fund to clean the undamaged lower stone. At that point, this phase of the job will be complete.

If it seems like progress is slow, look at this month's photograph on your Heritage Foundation calendar and note the contrast. As Gershwin wrote, things are looking up.

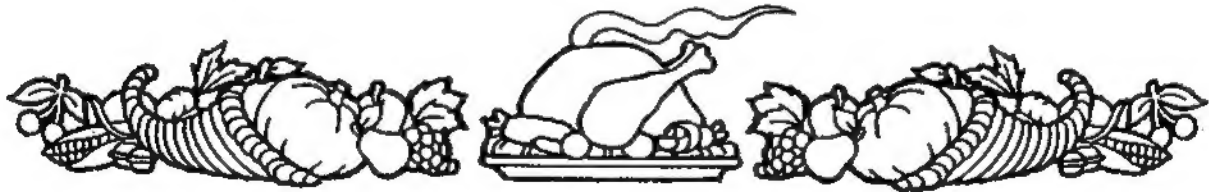
### **ACE IS THE PLACE**

by guest writer Jack Harris

I have been wanting to tell all my friends about the continuing good service one gets from the crew at Ace Congdon Hardware on Pearl Street in Downtown Ypsilanti. Talk about a Landmark. The faces may change somewhat, but the service goes on. Time after time I have come away from Ace with a sense that here is a survivor out of the past, where individual service can still be found. If I have a specific problem, I usually try to find Paul. Paul has given me invaluable help and advice over the past several years--and sometimes more. Example: on a recent visit I asked about paint scrapers. While Paul and I stared at the wall holding his impressive display of these items, I mentioned that I had an old 'Red Devil' scraper at home but that it had lost its sharpness. "Bring it in," he said. So I went home, found TWO of them, and headed back downtown. He was surprised to find how I could have allowed them to get into such poor condition, but he sharpened them until they looked like new. I may be known as a tightwad (after all, I am a child of the Great Depression), but I don't mind spending a little cash in a place like Ace in Downtown Ypsilanti.

## STREETSCAPE PROJECT

The streetscape project downtown is in its final phase. The streetlights, trees, bricks, and curbing all look very elegant. The contractor is slowly going through the "punch list" of remaining items. Among those items will be a sturdy, attractive fence between the Riverside Arts Center parking area and Bonnie and Ed Penet's house on 108 N. Huron. The new streetlights contain electrical outlets for plugging in holiday displays, and many also have brackets to support banners for use during special occasions.

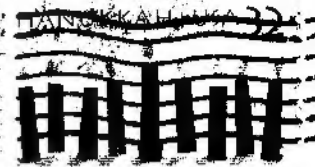


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